

# Child Writes

2016 Summer Anthology



## Problems Solved

Edited by Emma Mactaggart

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Each contributor named in this anthology maintains the copyright of his or her own submission. Please share this anthology with your entire world – in schools, with anyone who you believe is open to the conversation about change!

Every child who had entered the last three National Child Writes Competitions was extended an invitation to flex their pens and write over summer. Creating publishing opportunities and giving children a voice is a priority of The Child Writes Foundation

Thank you x

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A digital copy of this anthology has been sent to the National Library of Australia



# Child Writes Summer Anthology 2016

An anthology is an opportunity to have a shared conversation, from different perspectives, about a common theme. The 2016 Child Writes Summer Anthology was created by passionate writers, all children, who believe in the possibilities of change.

The children who submitted for this year's anthology were asked one simple question – what problem do you want to solve?

The response was as varied as the children submitting!

With elegant poems, fiction and non-fiction, each to the 10,000 words shared in this anthology give us something to ponder.

Importantly, it gives the children a voice as they share their concerns about global warming, the environment, how we treat each other and the animals around us, and how we deal with issues ourselves.

With strength and courage, they submit for your reading – and I am intensely proud of being able to work with these children, editing and helping them make their stories stronger – so they can share their thoughts and visions with you.

Enjoy!

Emma Mactaggart

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# Believe

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By Jordan Mumme-Robinson, Age 11

Simple as it sounds,  
Believing deters hopeless mounds,  
Of insults, tears and self doubt,  
Cause that's not what believing's about,  
To believe you have to stay true,  
To the one and only you,  
Which is hard in a world of put downs,  
With less smiles, and more frowns.  
That's why you have to believe,  
So other people believe to conceive,  
Beliefs are what make you grow,  
By bringing you up from the low,  
It helps without the hinders,  
Without believing your reduced to cinders.  
So believe to show yourself you care,  
As when you believe your half way there!

# The Problem, and of course, Viki.

---

By Ella Brennemo, Age 11

It was a Monday. Simple as that. If you were much, much older then perhaps this wouldn't affect you as much as it affected the youngsters of the world.

Monday was a great day for some people; they could be getting married, seeing a friend or perhaps they just felt good. But Monday brought tears to the eyes of some people because Monday meant school.

Viki sat at the end table in the classroom, bored beyond belief. Her eyes were slightly glazed over and she was almost asleep until she heard the word "Writing". She practically jumped at the word. Once she had recovered, Viki managed to focus on what was actually happening. She saw the classroom as though for the first time in years. It was a little room with a lot of half-circle and square tables in it. By the door, a collection of bag lockers, then a cupboard and the teacher's desk. Viki saw the big blackboard and bookshelf, the students and the teacher.

On the blackboard was written:

*What problem would you solve?*

It was the day's writing task, possibly a big question for a girl in Year 6. Still, it got her gears turning.

"Solve a problem?" Viki asked herself as she always did. Like a maths problem or a big problem that didn't just affect her or didn't affect her at all.

She suddenly felt greedy and selfish. Even though she wasn't being anything of the sort. She had everything. Well, not everything of course, but she had food, clean water, a safe house, a nice bedroom (even if she had to share it with her younger sister), she had everything

you could need and more (the more being the very nice tangle teaser brush she owned).

She thought of all her happy memories; having picnics in the backyard with her Dad, watching Barbie movies in bed when she was five and was very sick, washing her dog after a bush walk. Some people had seen things that people shouldn't see...

"Viki are you going to write?" It was her teacher (the black cloud of doom some people called him and rightly so) coming to 'check' on her.

"Yes. I was just thinking about what the problem could be."

"Well come on then," said the teacher as though his life depended on it.

"Ok I will, see?" Said Viki, writing a word.

"Very well then young lady," he said as he strode off.

Viki could see the assistant teacher looking at her (he should have been called the smiling assassin but no one had thought of that yet). This question had been posed openly to her but she could think of nothing. Two minutes later, something clicked. There *was* a problem. A big problem that if it wasn't fixed the world may not even be safe to live in. That problem was global warming. Viki began to write:

*The problem*

*I recall a time, long ago when people listened.*

*To the sea, the sun the sand. To the world.*

*People stopped listening as time wore on and the world started to get weaker.*

*People were hurting other people and themselves. But before we can solve these problems like hunger, thirst and murder, we need to solve the world.*

*The world is important and yet pollution, littering and people not caring is encouraging a thing that we call global warming.*

*Without the world being healthy and safe nothing else can happen.  
Other issues can't be fixed.*

*And people: they aren't listening to what is very real.*

*Take the time to look after our planet, make it safe for further  
generations to come. So we can solve other problems to help the world  
and its people.*

Viki finished up. She breathed out and shook out her hand. What she was writing was true and hopefully it would help other people so her friend Lily could be an actor and Harper could care for animals and work with the human body, and Casy could be whatever she wanted.

Viki hoped that her voice was heard in the vast darkness of the world because without the world she wouldn't be here today and she couldn't do the things she did. The world was her home and she wanted to keep it this way.

# The Challenge

---

By Ava Green

One sunny Wednesday morning, Lucy Peterson and her sister Eva, were sitting in the school hall waiting for assembly to start. Lucy was excited and nervous at the same time because she had to give a presentation to the whole school with her friend Oscar Shaw, about the indigenous people of Australia. Just as she turned to talk to Eva, her teacher Mr. Morgan took the stage and started the assembly.

"Good morning everyone," said Mr. Morgan.

"Good morning Mr. Morgan," replied the students of the school.

"Before the principal and staff speak to you all, the year six class would like to give you a presentation on the indigenous people of Australia," Mr. Morgan said enthusiastically, "I gave them the task of putting together a presentation and they have been working on it for the past week. So without further adieu, I present Miss Lucy Peterson and Master Oscar Shaw, representing the year 6 class!"

Lucy got up and walked up onto the stage with Oscar.

"Good morning everyone. My name is Lucy and today I will be talking to you all about the indigenous people of Australia. My class and I had a choice of what we wanted to discuss on this topic and so we all decided that it should be about what the white people did when they first arrived in Australia and how we can be improve things today," said Lucy, pausing and looking at Mr. Morgan who gave her an encouraging smile.

"When the English first came to Australia, the Aboriginals were living very different to what they do now. They lived in shelters that were made out of sticks, palm branches, leaves and caves. They ate fish, insects, kangaroos, plants and other foods that the English would not have eaten. They had different beliefs like every religion does and their culture was unique.

Now, all their culture, knowledge and way of life is slowly disappearing and has been forgotten. Life for them today is so different to how their

ancestors would have lived, and a lot of them struggle without their culture. They have difficulty controlling alcohol and other influences. Over the years more and more Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders keep losing more of their culture because there isn't the opportunity for their young to learn about their culture. Not all of the parents or elders know much about it to enable them to teach their kids. The Aboriginals have been through a lot and are still not as respected as they should be.

There are so many issues that have happened that most of us aren't aware of. While we were doing this project, I spoke to my uncle's friend and told him about the project we were given. He told me that where he lives now, there is a creek and it was called Murdering Creek. It was named this because Aboriginals used to live there long ago and the "white people" used to come and shoot the Aboriginals for fun. When he told me this, I thought to myself, "Why? We are all the same and Aboriginals are actually smarter than people think. They have a lot of knowledge about the land!"

There are so many things that we have misunderstood about the Aboriginals when they are so much like us except that they have a different culture. So why weren't they accepted? Why did all these things happen to them? They were the ones who were here first and that should have been respected. There are many un-answered questions also regarding the rights to their land.

I have a few questions that I would like you all to think about:

Do you think we should have influenced their way of life with our ways of living? Or should we have left them to live in their tribal communities?

Please think about these questions and when you go back to your classroom, your teacher will have a box so you can write your suggestion on a piece of paper. Now Oscar will give a talk on the campaign we have set up."

Lucy took her seat on the stage and Oscar started his speech.

"Hello. My name is Oscar, and I will be giving you a talk on the campaign that the year 6 class has organised. The campaign is about the indigenous people of Australia and what they would like. In March next year, we will be travelling around Australia to all the Aboriginal towns

and interviewing them and asking them how they want to live and get their opinion. If any of you have anything you want to offer to the indigenous people, please give them to your teacher. The trip will take four and a half months and when we return, we shall send a request to the High Court regarding what the indigenous people of Australia want! If any of you want to get involved, please see any one from the Year 6 class and they will sign you up!" said Oscar, pumping his fist.

"On behalf of everyone from Year 6, I hope that you feel excited about this campaign!"

Oscar and Lucy went back to where the rest of the class was sitting. As Oscar and Lucy passed Mr. Morgan he whispered, "You guys nailed it!"

Mr. Morgan went onto the stage and said, "Thank you Lucy and Oscar for that wonderful presentation and well done to everyone involved. I chose that problem for my class because it is an issue that everyone in Australia needs to think about and come up with solutions. Next up we have the principal who would like to say a few things."

He went back to his seat and turned around to Oscar and Lucy and gave them the thumbs up!

# Which Way

---

By Xavier Keamy-Browne, Age 12

Wet clothes plaster my very cold skin.

I hurry through the billowing trees.

'How many ridges did I cross? Three, four, maybe five. Have I crossed five?' I mutter to myself.

Yellow turns into gold and will quickly be black.

I'm caught out.

Stuck.

Lost.

'Will I make it?'

Rain pours.

'I have to make a shelter.'

My brain kicks into overdrive. I gather sticks; I drop dead trees and try to build the best shelter I can. I'm almost feeling what I'm trying to see.

My stomach churns like a washing machine. In my meagre made protection, the weather is held back a little. I slump, my chin hits my chest. I dream of my home, some wonderful food and my bed. This wonderful haven continues, until.....

Thump!

'Huh!'

'Huh!'

'What was that?' I yell.

I jolt with fright.

There's something moving, touching my body. It has no warmth at all, cold.

I run. Sticks graze my ankle and low lying branches scrape my face with no forgiveness.

'It's so dark out here, I need shelter.'

'Where's my shelter?'

With caution, I wander around until I realise, I'm lost, once more.

I collapse in a heap under a tree. My teeth are chattering. The rain has slowed to a trickle. I beginning to wonder, 'How hard is it going be for someone to find me?' I have just one wish. The forest has become quiet. It seems like hours and hours of silence. Everything is still.

I start to hear twitters in numbers. I notice dawn is breaking. It's a beautiful marriage of gold yellow and pink form before me. 'I'm facing east!' I realise. As the sun enters the sky I head off. Walking towards the sunrise, walking towards the warmth, somewhere there should be a road.

I don't know where I am or where I started anymore. I walk blindly in the light, not knowing where I'm going or where I'm going to end up. But where I'm heading will definitely be east. I'm really overwhelmed. I need a break. Warm tears fall like rain, adding salt to the wounds of my cheeks. I slump to the ground.

'Am I going to be lost forever?'

I calm myself down. Slow my breath.

'How many ridges have I crossed, three, four, maybe five?'

'Oh, I don't know!' I yell at myself.

'Think!'

Legs ache with a hurt I've never felt before.

'I've got to get this to work.'

'I've got to get me to work.'

'Come on,' I say to myself.

Every step thinking I cannot go on, but I do. Will takes control of body, takes my brain. Sticks, branches and rocks bite mercilessly at my arms, legs and ankles but I continue on, never stopping, never ceasing.

Golden sun filters through the emerald trees as I stumble over a set of silvery, slippery fallen hollowed logs.

A road comes into view. I quickly scuttle through its ditch and spring onto the road. My once weary heart bounds for joy.

Never again shall I stray from the path.

But, the question is, which way is the right direction?

# Beyond the Blue

---

By Emma Donald, Age 12

“Cristi, I asked you what you answered to question five - no, don’t answer, it doesn’t matter now. What have you been daydreaming about?”

“Um... I was thinking about global warming, Ms. Raechal.” I mutter, my cheeks flushing red.

“Global warming. I see. Well, you can spend your time at home thinking about global warming, but I’m sure the world will be fine while you are at school. Now, what did you answer to question five?” trills Ms. Raechal sharply.

I hastily agree with her, ignoring the sniggering of the class, and check what I answered to question five, silently fuming. Doesn’t anyone else care about our planet?

\*\*\*

I sigh, sliding mournfully until I am draped half out of bed, my toasty-warm feet brushing the icy floor. I shiver, the world around me too noisy and abrupt for comfort. No way am I going to school today.

“Christi! Get up!” Mum was yelling out from the kitchen. Ugh. The floor seems a million miles away, the kitchen barely hovering on the edge of existence.

I cast a glance back at my bed, a single longing glance... What was that? I swear I just saw something slip into my room.

“Don’t be stupid!” I criticize myself, but a feeling of unease washes over me.

I chug down a glass of milk. My toast is burnt to a crisp, as if someone laughingly tossed it up to the sun. I hear a sloshing sound emitting from my bedroom, but dismiss it with a shake of my head. I trudge to the bathroom, with the sounds of my brother’s banter ringing in my ears.

As I grab my hairbrush from the shelf, my other brother, Daniel, skips in with a jam jar full of iridescent blue liquid.

“Ew, what *is* that, Daniel? You are *so* gross,” I moan, averting my eyes from his innocent gestures.

“Found it in the bin!” he laughs. Why on *earth* was he looking in the bin?

“Dunno what it is, but maybe you do,” a wide grin splits his face in two. With a ridiculous flourish, he rips off the jar’s lid and splashes the

contents onto my leg. Little demon. He sprints off, cackling with his trademark annoying-brother glee.

I walk into my room as I peel back the now *glowing*, for goodness sake, sticky goo off my nightdress.

Oh.

Oh.

Blood trickles down my leg from where the iridescent liquid struck me, puddling around my feet. The floorboards are quite uneven here. I'll have to tell Dad about that. It's funny what you notice in moments like this. Darkness imbues my mind, sweeping away my vision, as the smell of coppery blood reaches my nostrils.

As reality slams me to the floor, I scream for Mum and she comes rushing in to me. What follows is an intense debate on the state of my leg, which Mum ends quickly by striding purposefully out of my room. I hear a car engine start.

"Get here *right now*, Cristi-Louise! You have *nothing* wrong with your leg, it is *not* bleeding and *THAT IS FINAL!* I will have none of your impossible excuses! None! Now get in the car or there will be *consequences.*" threatens Mum dramatically. Nobody sees the blood but me.

I whimper like a dog struck by its master, surprising everyone, most of all myself. School is much the same - I hover on the edge of consciousness, swaying through the corridors as if they are full of murky water and hidden beasts. I'm sure that I must look like Daniel that time in first grade when he was struck by a strange illness.

After what has got to be the most terrible day of my life, I arrive home. Mum and Dad are both still at work. The key is sticky in my hand. All this blood is getting to me. I enter my room and a scream of pure animal terror rips out of my throat. There is a sickly green creature, humanoid, yet stretched unnaturally, crouching over a sort of lab set up on my bed. It has slits for eyes, mouth and nose. It's filling jam jars with iridescent blue liquid. It whips around and tossed the terrible liquid into my face, blinding me with my own blood. I never knew blood could hurt this much. It stings my eyes like a million furious wasps. Blood and salty tears mingle in my mouth, causing me to retch uncontrollably.

Working silently, the creature takes a length of grey cord from my bedside table, and trusses me to a chair. The cord bites my wrists like a cruel snake. I part my lips to cry for help, but it slaps me across the face-whap! Suddenly, I notice the creature reminds me of Daniel. The face is the same shape, and it walks as I imagine Daniel would if he were as tall as this thing.

As it works, it talks to me, in a voice not harsh, not sweet, but surprisingly familiar. "You humans are so ignorant," It pauses to cram more liquid into a dirty glass beaker. "You were so accepting of sweet, little Daniel, how he was sick and weak for months after he turned seven, then suddenly was healed, and went back to school as a fabulous student, despite missing the entire second grade. You had not a clue that I had become him, that I was using him to complete my experiments on humankind.

"But he has become so pathetic lately, he has not enough strength for me to sap from him. So I've been waiting for this chance to take you over. I am sure you will be suitable. Little Daniel will be struck with a terrible virus, which will slowly destroy his mind until he has not the energy to keep his heart beating. You will supposedly catch the same virus, but survive, and be inhabited by me until my experiments are complete, which they will be very shortly. Then I shall simply leave, the world dying of the 'bleeding disease', which will spread quickly once I have finished designing it. It will be truly wonderful to know that I have changed the world in a lasting way," a hideous smile touches the creature's face; replaced as quickly by its seemingly usual emotionless expression.

I simply sit there, flabbergasted, not knowing how to react. At last I gather myself enough to croak a feeble, "You can't succeed. I won't let you 'take me over', I won't let you!"

"If you're so smart, and you want to change the world so much, can't you do something good? You could help stop global warming! Why change it like this?" By the end, tears are streaming down my face. The fear I've felt at facing this creature is shameful.

A look of anger, and a strange resentment, flits across its face, radiating fury, until the creature reins it back with a shake of its head. "People don't *want* to be helped! Do you really think they would accept change?" It gives the seat I'm bound to a disdainful kick, ties a handkerchief over my mouth, and gets back to work.

I begin to let my thoughts wander. Maybe I could find a way to force this malicious creature back where it came from? With what could I hold it hostage? It does not seem to have any weaknesses, apart from that look when it mentioned it's homeland. Could I find a way into that? It all seems so difficult, but surely I'll beat it, it can't possibly end any other way-

No wait! Scraps of my conversations with the creature teasingly poke me, as if they know something I don't. Yes! I could force it to stay and help! Maybe it could stop global warming! The possibilities are

endless... Although I'll get nowhere without it in my power, I might be able to find clues on how to do just that if I knew more about the creature's exile, but it seems a very tender subject to it, and no *way* do I want to provoke that thing.

I sigh. There's just so much I don't know about it.

Although it seems impossible, I finally give in to a dreamless doze, punctured only by quick spurs of hope, which seem to dissipate at an impossible rate.

I hear the sound of a car door slamming on our driveway. No - surely it couldn't be -

"I'm home Cristi!"

# Even an 8 year old girl can make a difference

---

By Amy Wallace, Age 8

When I started thinking about problems I could solve I thought about school problems as well as world-wide problems. I started brainstorming different problems that people could have and came up with a list: bullying, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, homelessness, problems within families and the big gap between rich and poor people. I then looked at the list and worked out which ones *I* could try my best to help prevent. I then did another brainstorm doing a picture (below).

I believe that if every person did their best to make other people feel happy then we could solve many problems in our world. I try to do this whenever I can. Even doing small things can make a difference. At the end of term 2 last year, I made a card for each person in my class. Each card had the first letter of each of my classmate's names on the front. Each letter was wooden and I painted it with bright paint and glued it onto the front of the card. I then wrote about six words describing the person's characteristics across the wooden letter. I used words like, 'friendly, kind, fast, and nice'. Inside I wrote a note like,

*Dear Sam, as I have gotten to know you better this year I've noticed your characteristics. I thought I would let you know some that I admire in you.*

*It has been fun to be in a class with you.*

*From Amy*

When it was recess I asked my teacher if I could put cards I had made for each person on their desks. My teacher agreed. After recess, I had to unfortunately go to my piano lesson, so I couldn't watch my classmates open their cards. When I came back everybody thanked me over and over again. By the end I had got about 50 'thank you's' because there were 20 people in my class (including my teacher).

A week later another teacher told my mum that she just had to tell her about their last staff meeting. She said that my teacher told all the teachers that I did something that made her cry happy tears. My

teacher said that she was so touched by what I did for everyone in my class. My teacher said it was amazing to see how, reading their cards from me, made the children shine with the biggest smiles ever! The teacher telling my mum the story said that she had taught with my teacher for over 10 years and had never seen her cry happy tears.

It was amazing how something as simple as a card can mean so much too so many.



# Strawberry Stripes

---

By Jessica Maher, Age 10

Maarran was woken suddenly to the thundering of work trucks. "Maarran!" called his mother, "Go collect the water!" Maarran threw off the thin blanket reluctantly and struggled off the mud floor. He grabbed his barrel and set off, dodging tree stumps into what remained of the jungle.

Maarran stopped for a rest. He was hot and sweaty as his barrel was heavy with water. He sat on a log and soon fell fast asleep. Maarran woke and this time not from the trucks. It was rustling sound coming from an old towering Banyan. Maarran stood in curiosity and steadily inched over to the tree. Rustle, rustle. The ferns beneath were shaking. Very carefully, Maarran peered through the ferns to see stripes. He stood thinking, "What has stripes?" Then it hit him..."Tigers!"

Maarran turned and sprinted as fast as he could, with the tiger not far behind. Soon came the unbearable desire to look behind him. So, quickly he took a glance over his shoulder. A puzzled feeling washed over Maarran so he stopped and turned. "Meow", purred the baby tiger. Though Maarran's heart dropped from his throat to his chest he stood frowning, puzzled. This didn't look like a tiger he'd seen before. Instead of being black and orange it was a creamy, pinky orange with faded brown stripes and white on its belly.

After a while Maarran tucked away this thought, stood and looked about. "Where's your mother?" he asked the cub.

"Meow", said the cub. At this point Maarran figured the cub was abandoned. Maarran promised himself that he would visit it every day. Over the weeks as they played together a great friendship was formed between them until one day disaster struck. As usual Maarran entered the jungle, filled his barrel and went to look for his friend, but he wasn't at their meeting spot. Maarran searched all over the jungle, calling as he went. He thought he had heard a strange sound and ran towards it. There in the centre of the jungle he found his friend lying on the ground stuck underneath a large branch which had fallen onto his front paw. Maarran ran to him and began tugging on the heavy log but he soon realized that a small boy could not shift it. As Maarran wondered what he could do, he heard the engines of the logging trucks coming closer.

He knew that he didn't have much time to save his tiger friend. He had to find help fast! Maarran sprinted as fast as a cheetah back to his village and all the while was thinking of who he could trust to help save his tiger. He certainly didn't want his friend to end up being a memory like others before him. Finally it came to him! His uncle Na worked for the Bandhavgarh National Park and hated how the animals were losing their homes and lives as a result of the increasing deforestation.

Finally Maarran and Uncle Na arrived to see the little tiger in great distress calling for help. Uncle Na used all of his strength to lift the log just enough for Maarran to quickly scoop up his friend. The bulldozers were so close now that they couldn't hear each other speak so Uncle Na pointed towards the village and they ran with all the energy that they had left. There was an incredible cracking sound and they both turned to see the tree that their tiger had been lying under, fall.

When they got to the village Uncle Na took the little tiger into his arms and Maarran followed them to the animal sanctuary. Uncle Na looked down at the tiger and smiled. He turned to Maarran and said, "You've got one special little friend here. He's a Golden Tiger which is also known as the Strawberry Tiger and they are the rarest breed of tiger in the wild."

Maarran smiled and replied, "I knew he was special". "What about the other tigers out there?" said Uncle Na. "Your little friend must have a Mum and Dad. They need to be safe too."

The next day Uncle Na went to his work and told his boss about Strawberry Stripes. Then his boss told the newspaper men. Everyone who read the newspaper told their friends and as the news spread, it soon came to government who eventually decided to turn Maarran's village and jungle area into a national park and wildlife sanctuary named after Strawberry Stripes. Soon other Strawberry tigers were being found and bred and every day Maarran would visit his friend, Strawberry Stripes.

# Back in the Saddle

---

By Briony Pannell, Age 11

So this is what has happened over the past few days.

I was dumped by Levitation my horse in the middle of my jumping course at the National Show Jumping Championships. In my division the jumps were 125cm, which is quite big. I fell during the jump off. My division was 13-18 year olds. Nobody else was 13 so I was the youngest competitor. Everyone else was 15 or older. There weren't many of us, about 20 maybe. To some people I guess that is quite a few young people.

Levitation shied at a jump and backed into the last one. He reared and when I came off he fell on me. I was rushed to hospital. I was unconscious for five hours.

When I woke up a doctor and a few medical students were examining me. Turns out I have a closed head injury, a cracked rib, broken right arm and a fractured jaw. Lucky I am left-handed. That explains why I hurt so much. I was also confused. I could hardly remember anything. Mum and Dad gave me this blank notebook. They suggested I write some stuff about myself.

My name is Ammy Pulling.

I am 14 years old.

My horses are Levitation, Plum, C adbury and Pudding.

My family is Mackenzie (younger sister) Dave ( Dad) Georgie ( Mum).

I participated in the 2015 National Show Jumping Championships

Mum promises that she will come tomorrow too. Dad can't because he's working. It was late when Mum came. She was only allowed to be in here for a little while. When Mum walked out Mackenzie stuck in her head (she wasn't allowed in) and we did our secret handshake, sort of. Mackenzie and I are really close. I would never

forget our handshake. Mum said it was Tuesday. Said that I would leave intensive care tomorrow morning.

I had dreams. My first dream, I dreamt about me. I completed the course at the Nationals. In fact I won. I was the youngest ever to win and even complete the course. I was titled National Show jump champion. I also had nightmares. I relived the horrific fall time and time again.

Two long days later I was at home and sort of mobile. If my breath became uneven or heavy my chest hurt and I still couldn't eat solid foods but at least I was a home.

I have more to add to my list.

My name is Ammy Pulling.

I am 14 years old.

My horses are Levitation, Plum, Pudding, Cadbury.

My family is Mackenzie, Dave, Georgie.

I participated in the National Show Jump Championships.

I fell off.

My favourite colour is red.

I am from South Australia and moved to Queensland when I was 12.

I asked Mum and Dad every day when I can ride. "When you heal" they say every time. I went to the stables some days. It is pretty boring being alone all day. I've visited school only once to see all my friends. Everyone signed my cast. The school holidays are soon. Mackenzie will be around more. I swear I'll go crazy if I have to stay confined much longer.

It has been two months and today I had my first ride. I rode Cadbury. Even though he is my horse he was also used as a school-master. He is safe. I rode for only five minutes. Dad led me around. I was beaming. It felt magical to be on the back of my horse. I don't think other people understand the adrenaline rush from riding the most beautiful creature on earth. I thought about that moment every second and longed to experience it again.

Mum and Dad were busy for the rest of the week. Mackenzie is an artist. She gave me a beautiful drawing of both of us together when we were younger. I was sitting on my first pony and Kenzie sat with her arms around me, her head on my shoulder. Just like my favourite photo.

“Let’s go to the stable.” I said as I examined the drawing.

“What?”

“I said lets go to the stable.” I repeated.

“Ok sure,” Mackenzie said, but her arms were folded tightly across her chest.

We walked slowly to the stables. When we got there I was so happy. It smelt of hay, dirt and horse. My favourite smell ever. Mackenzie sat on one of the chairs in the shade. I joined her.

“Remember,” I said, “when I fell off Plum a few years ago and didn’t tell Mum for seven months”

“That was so funny,” Mackenzie laughed.

“And remember when we still lived in Adelaide and Dad sat on that chocolate bar and it looked like he pooped himself,” she added. We laughed for a while until I started to hurt.

“Shall we ride?” I asked. Mackenzie stared at me with a what-the-hell –are-you-thinking- stare.

“But?”

“No, it’s bad enough that your chest is hurting,” she said and she held my hand, practically dragging me back to the house.

A while later Mackenzie was listening to music in her room so I quietly got changed and headed back to the stable. Cadbury was in his paddock. After I took him in and tacked him up I had to sit down for a minute. It still doesn’t take much to get me out of breath. Soon I hopped up and mounted. Dad would kill me if he caught me but this morning he said he would be back late and Mum too.

I moved forward. Cadbury was calm. My heart was beating fast, really fast, CRAZY fast. I was worried though I kept going. We kept going. My pounding heart soothed. I rode for seven minutes today. Only walking again. It was fun. I did a serpentine, figure of 8s,circles. I did those simple exercises before the accident missed those days. When I finished and put Cadbury back in his paddock I sat. I sat on the soft green

grass humming. I must have fallen asleep for a while because when I woke hours had passed. I walked back to the house. Mum and Dad were home.

“What were you doing?’ they asked.

“I just went to see Cadbury, I must have nodded off.” I said as innocently as I could. I didn’t ever get caught!

Much later, and it’s the school holidays now, I have ridden more and more. Mum said that tomorrow when I ride, I might be able to ride Plum. I like the sound of that. I was devastated when I found out that Levitation had a rotten tooth. Dad found it a few days after Nationals. It had suddenly made sense why he had acted like that. I was sort of hoping there was a reason for his behaviour though rather than him just being naughty. The vet came around to check Levitation. He said the procedure was simple and it was. Levitation was given some drugs for pain and to make him sleepy so he wouldn’t throw his head around. Then the vet just pulled it out. He gave me the tooth and it was pretty disgusting.

Tomorrow has now come!!!! I’ve just gotten changed but it’s raining a little and Mum’s heaps paranoid about my cast (even though I’m wearing a rain jacket on top.) I have to wait for Dad to get Plum in for me from the paddock. I like riding in light rain. I don’t know why. It’s just, well, it’s nice. Riding seriously helps me. I get to block out the world around me, and I can focus.

I’ve ridden. It was sprinkling with rain so Dad sat under the shade. After 15 minutes of just walking again Dad got up. I expected him to be getting up to help me get off but once he was in the arena he said, “How about a trot Amy?” I took a deep breath and nodded. I couldn’t believe what he just said. Dad clipped on a lead rope and I gathered my reins.

“Amy?” I looked down at him, “As soon as you want to stop just say.” I knew that he wouldn’t do anything I wasn’t comfortable doing.

“I know,” I whispered as I encouraged Plum to go forward into a slow trot. Dad ran alongside me. I realised suddenly why Dad had said to ride Plum. Her trot was smooth. Smooth enough not to jolt me, particularly my chest.

Levitation got better pretty quickly. We didn't want to ride him for a while because the bit might hurt when the bridle was on. He started eating as soon as we put him back out. It was probably about fifteen days until Mum next rode him. I watched. She only rode for a bit but I loved seeing Levitation back in work.

Christmas came and went as did New Year's. It emerged into 2016 and soon I would have to go back to school. I was completely healed. I have cantered (It was on Plum). I also trotted over some trot poles and a tiny jump on Pudding. It was on a Sunday afternoon, my first jump that is. Dad had put up a cross rail as low as it would go before I rode. Once I had gotten on and warmed up Dad pointed to the rail. I smiled and looked at him with a 'seriously' look. He nodded. Pudding was right into it. I settled her and she realised she had to treat me like a beginner. Pudding was perfect. I didn't stop smiling all day.

I made a goal for myself. Get back to the level I was before the accident. Given this might take a long time I also set myself short-term goals. One at the moment to jump 70cm by December could be possible. My confidence is slowly coming back though I'm not up to riding Levitation yet. Baby steps, that's what Mum says.

School is looming, only a day away. I can eat solid food; have no cast, my rib no longer hurts. I still get headaches sometimes though I can handle them. I'm going to jump on Pudding today and I'm super-duper excited. I jumped 40cm. Biggest yet!

School started. It has been a term. Yesterday I had a lesson from my coach. I jumped 60cm. After my lesson I rode Levitation. I walked for a long time getting used to him. Then I trotted. I took deep breaths, scared that something would happen. I soon cantered, very cautiously, but I cantered all the same. Suddenly I was no longer scared. I was happy, very happy. I was definitely not ready to jump but I did walk over a few trot poles. Everyone cheered, I was so proud of myself.

I reached my goal. My 70cm goal. It was on Plum a few weeks ago. I don't think I will ever get back to the standard I was at before you know what.

I am progressing with my riding.

When I rode Levitation last it was just Dad and I. I walked, trotted and cantered. Dad was making some feeds so he couldn't see me. I got off and walked over to the jumps. I put the first one down to a small cross pole. I got back on and Levitation started to canter. He was used to doing this near the jumps but I eased him back to walk. Levitation stepped over the cross pole. Dad came out of the feed room. We walked over the cross a few times. I brought him round again, this time at a trot. We repeated this a few times as we had done through the walk. I took two deep breaths and prepared for canter. At my slightest command he cantered. We faced the jump and Levitation took it in his stride.

I was so amazed at what I just did. Although I had cleared huge jumps on him millions of times before, this felt more special. More special than even the first time I jumped with him and I don't totally know why.

I went to my first show yesterday. I competed in a Rider class and a Galloway class. In my rider I came third and in my Galloway third. I rode Pudding in both classes and she was an angel. I also competed in a show jump event. The course was simple and only 40 cm. I didn't place but was so, so happy with the result. Mum said I should be proud. I WAS! The show was at the same grounds as the Championship. Some of the Committee members recognized me so came and said hey and stuff. They told me that before the fall I was the fastest with no poles down. I couldn't believe what they just said to me. Dad said if it wasn't for the fall I might have won. I daydreamed of myself receiving the champion ribbon trophy and cash prize. Then I felt like the unluckiest person ever...until I realized I was maybe more like the luckiest person ever with incredible support from my family and friends. And maybe, I thought, just maybe the pain was worth it.

## Just 25

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By Erin Buchbach, Age 11

Bullets whistled past my ears. The sounds of battle, of the pain, and most of all the fear were penetrating my mind like fire. If I got away, if I survived I knew I would never forget this moment. I saw a man run past me – friend or foe, I did not know.

I felt a pain in my leg, which I had never experienced before. Everything was a blur. I was falling towards the ground. I hit the rocks, felt them punch my body and suddenly my mind came back to reality. I could hear the booms and crashes and clearly saw men fall to the ground, blood pouring from their wounds. The German soldiers were closing in.

‘This is it,’ the thought ran through my mind and I didn’t know whether to fight, to survive or to sink into impenetrable darkness. I thought of all the people I loved, my mother, father, and my dear little sister. I lifted my head. I couldn’t die now, not on these shores and grounds of France, not when I was just 25, not....not now.

I could feel blood leaving my body but I could survive, and I would....and yet, it would be so much easier to die. I thought of the horrible telegram – *Killed in Action* – and what my family would do. Would feel.

As I lie on the hard ground, rocks pressing into to me, despair hits me. Why is this war my problem? Why did I make it my problem? I never needed to do this. I wanted the glory, the pleasure of being admired as hero. I think back to the day I signed on. My sister beside me, beaming with pride at the thought of me fighting for Australia. She never understood. I never understood.

If I only I could have my time again I would bend down and stare into my beautiful young sister’s eyes and explain it to her. ‘War is not a cause for pride and glory,’ I would say. ‘It has a much darker and gruesome purpose. It seeks to kill innocent men and to blind them with hate. When you are older I want you to fight for peace, not the pointless destruction of war.’ She would know what to do.

My body may never be found. I couldn't leave the world like this, but I couldn't hold on anymore. The pain was unbearable. In the end there are no choices. I would leave this life like this.

Even if I survived, I would never recover.

Never recover from this mess.

This war.

# The Way the Wind Blows

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By Jaimie Cates, Age 8

Robert was sitting in the car staring at his new house in the Forest of Terrell. The house was big and long with grey windows with a cobweb in every corner, which looked like they had never been cleaned, with a door as black as space.

After they got settled Robert's dad was going to hunt for deer. He asked Robert to meet the people in the three other houses. Robert would have preferred his father to come with him, but if they were going to live there permanently, it did make sense he met the neighbours. He started with Mr. Banks, his dad's boss, who lived in the first house. Then he went to the second house. It was home to a man called Bear. He was a huge man with a bushy beard so it was easy to see how he got his name.

He looked at the last house. It was small yet it looked just like a haunted house from a Halloween movie. He slowly crept towards the house. He rang the doorbell. The door creaked open he could not see anyone, then he felt tugging at his shorts. He looked down he saw little old woman in ragged clothing, a very crooked back and a walking stick. He bent down to shake her hand. She dragged him inside with incredible strength and he sat down on the floor. The chairs were so small; she was the only one who fit. She told Robert about the death fog and how it can make people appear in different places. She also told him about how she made friends with the wind and how the death fog was very dangerous. It had the power to suck up anything in its path. The wind was a friend, holding back the fog. The wind had lost control of the fog and had befriended the old lady. She needed to steal a magic potion from fog because it was trying to destroy the city. So far the wind was blocking the fogs attempts at destruction. The old lady felt helpless as she was too old. So for many years she tried to find a child that could do it for her. She gave Robert some glasses that would give him the power to see wind. He was absolutely transfixed by the story and really wanted to help the old lady.

Robert packed and he was on his way, past the lake, through the bush up the hill and into the heart of the forest. He put on the glasses. He saw something that looked like a man in a black cloak with fog coming off it. The fog started circling Robert, a few seconds later the fog started clearing.

He saw wind. She was beautiful, with long wavy bits of wind as her hair, a dress made out of sunshine, eyes like twinkling stars, lips as red as blood. She told him that the potion was in the basement of fog's house, which is guarded by giant tigers and booby-traps.

Robert found his way to the heart of the forest. There it was, the fog's house. He went inside. It was dark and there was a thick layer of dust everywhere. Robert put on the glasses and felt drawn towards the basement. There he felt the wind lift him over the giant tigers, away from their claws. The wind lifted the bottle of magic potion till it was hovering over the tiger's heads. Robert grabbed the potion with two hands and floated on the wind, back upstairs and out the door and into the forest. He called for the wind and the old lady to help him find the fog.

The old lady appeared and together with the wind, they worked their charms until the whole forest was covered in fog. It circled them starting at their feet and quite suffocating. Robert quickly opened the magic potion and threw it at the creature in the black cloak who was swirling towards him. He started to melt until only his cloak was left lying on the forest floor. The whole forest smiled with joy and the wind she was even more beautiful than before.

# Outsider

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By Daisy March, Age 12

Michael combed his short red hair, put on his glasses and school uniform as he ran down the hallway to breakfast.

“Michael, are you sure you’ll be okay, walking to school today, all by your self?” Mum asked as she flipped the bacon onto a plate.

“Mum, don’t worry. Ill be fine” Michael said, reaching across the table and snatching a piece of bacon.

“Well, be good, learn good and ... “ Mum shouts over the slam of the door

“I know, and have fun,” Michael replied.

Michael munched on the bacon as he walked casually down the street towards school when something suddenly stopped him right in his tracks.

“Hey, its red head, isn’t it a coincidence I forgot my lunch money today? It’s just arrived,” shouts Big Bob to Michael.

“You’re not going to take my lunch money Bob,” screamed Michael.

“It’s BIG Bob to you, shrimp!” sniggered Bob as he made his way over to Michael, closely followed by his gang.

“Now give it!” Big Bob said, as he aggressively grabbed Michael bag.

“Stop it!” yelled Michael

Big Bob decided to not bother with the money any more. Instead he was interested in the mud puddle he could see in front of him.

“What are you doing?” Michael asked in a panicked voice.

Big Bob didn’t answer but Michael knew what was happening.

Big Bob was heading straight for the big muddy puddle!

SPLAT!

“Ha, you’re such a loser,” Big Bob shouts as he and his gang laugh their heads off.

“BOO!” Came a shout from a bush near by. Big Bob jumps to see a girl standing near him.

“You’d better get out of here!” the girl shouts.

“Come on guys, they’re not worth it,” shouts Big Bob and walks away.

Michael was covered in mud when he came to, he didn't notice the figure standing above him until he heard something.

"Are you alright?" It was the girl. She had hair as red as Michael's but much longer.

"Who are you?" Michael asked, bolting upright and staring at the girl.

"I'm Molly, you?" she asked.

"I'm Michael," he replied.

"We should get you to the nurse, the school isn't too far away," Molly said as she helped Michael up.

"Okay," replied Michael.

\*

"And that, kids, is how your mother saved me from a hard life full of bullying"

Michael told his four kids. "Time for bed, children," Molly called.

"Awwwww" whined Dillon

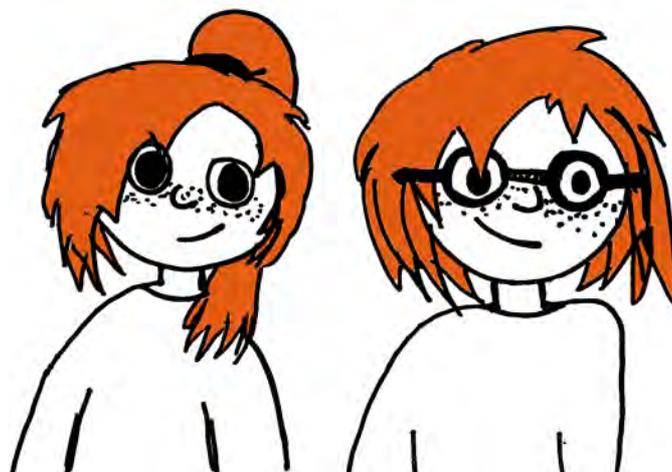
"But children of a hero don't sleep, we save the world like you, Mum," Mick complained.

"Yeah!" Anne agreed.

"My mother is a hero, my mother is a hero," Jane sings as she skipped around Molly,

"Kids, don't harass your mother, you heard her, time for bed" Michael told the kids as he picked up Anne.

"Good night, my dears, sleep well tonight" Michael says as he kisses them, "Don't let Big Bob's gang bite!"



# What problem do I want to solve?

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By Keagan Wallace, Age 10

*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged  
by the way its animals are treated” – Mahatma Gandhi*

How would our Australian society be rated? How do you treat your animals and what does it say about you?

When thinking about what problem I would like to solve, cruelty to animals came to mind. This is a worldwide issue and very close to my heart.

Animals are valued in numerous societies and play an important role in our lives. Animals are used in therapeutic roles such as guide dogs who become the eyes of those visually impaired. Animals can also help in occupational therapy and speech therapy. Dogs are trained to detect seizures. As well as all this animals are also great companions. Scientific research shows that people who own a pet have healthier hearts, stay home sick less, make fewer visits to the doctor, get more exercise and are less depressed.

So why hurt or even kill animals?

People who treat animals well feel better about themselves, which makes them treat others better. The butterfly effect is caused, making a whole nation or even the world better all because of one person treating an animal well.

This is something that could be achieved by individuals who own a pet. Most people I know own a pet. If each person treats their pets well it could make them feel better within themselves. This will then help to make relationships between family members positive. Positive families with good relationship could make good communities. Lots of good communities make up a positive and moral country. So being kind and gentle with your own pets, others' pets as any other animals that you come into contact with can help contribute to a moral country.

# Learning the Hard Way

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By Lily Howells, Age 12

Two years ago, I read a book. I read it within two days. Nerves twitched in my stomach, and anger erupted from my chest, making me want to scream out and put this disgrace to an end. All these emotions were a clear sign that it was a good book. I got in trouble in class twice, as I would hide it inside my tray and read it during Math. It was so good that I wrote a letter to the author, telling her of what an inspirational book it was. Unfortunately, I did not send it though. This book was so inspirational and I knew what problem I wanted to solve. A problem, which to me had seemed so simple at the time. It wasn't. But what I knew for sure was that I wanted to become a Human Rights Lawyer. And what I also knew was that Malala Yousafzai would forever be my idol. This is the story of the girl who believed things could be better.

Malala Yousafzai was a ten year old Pakistani girl when the Taliban terrorized her region. Religion was tight, and any disrespect or breaking of the religious standard would be a crime. Music was prohibited. Women couldn't attend markets or leave the house without a male to accompany them. Girls weren't allowed to receive an education. Most children take education for granted. You know, just going to school. It is not something to take for granted. Math, English, Science; they are all important. In countries like mine, Australia, school is just a fact of life. Almost seen as a chore. 'Do I have to go to school today?' But what most of you don't realise, is how blessed we are to have the gift of learning. School sends you on different paths, to discovery, creativity. Imagine not being allowed to go to school. What is the purpose of life without learning?

Malala went to a school her father had founded, in Swat Valley. In 2008, the Taliban, a group of Muslim fundamentalists, attacked many girls schools in the region. Soon after an attack, Malala gave a speech, the title, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?" This was the start to her activism.

With more developing publicity, she continued to raise awareness of the right to an education for all women and girls. In 2011, Malala was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize, and was also awarded Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize.

When Malala was just 14 years old, her family found that the Taliban had issued a death threat to her if she insisted to continue as an anti-Taliban activist.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 2012, Malala boarded the bus home after school, when a young man stopped the bus and questioned the driver whether it was the Khushal School bus. He then asked, "Who is Malala?" All her friends turned to Malala, giving her away. The terrorist shot her three times, one bullet hitting the left side of her head, going down to her neck. Two other girls were injured during the attack. No one thought Malala Yousafzai would survive.

After series of tests, surgery, and a half shaved head, Malala was in better condition. She still continues to follow what she believes in.

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I'd describe Malala's story as heart-warming. A girl, at the age of ten, knew something wasn't right – and had the courage to speak up and change the world.

Countries around the world still discriminate. I'm sure our creator didn't intend us to live a life full of hatred and unfairness. Why should women be treated as meaningless souls? Without women, our entire human race would be over. Without women, there would be no men. Without men, the earth would be a lone, uninhabited planet. Think about it. Without women, there would be no children, no young to turn to old. 93% of nurses around the world are women. So why deny them education and freedom? Women are capable of just as much as men. I am aware that it is religion, but what I am confused by, is why women are not allowed the same rights as men? Why should religion stand in the way of learning and joy? Men can go to school. Men can leave the house unaccompanied. What is the difference between a women and a man? They both come from the same race, both have brains, both are

human. Is it the physical difference they are worried about? Because, honestly for me, whether it was women or man, I would still stand up for the right to education - for all.

# The Seahorse in the Rockpool

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By Serena Hawkins

Once upon a time, a little seahorse named Ralph was playing with his baby brother, Billy. They had so much fun! They played Simon-says, Follow the Leader, and Chases. But they then heard a sound... a big underwater wave was approaching! He told Billy to cling onto some seaweed, some nice, strong seaweed. But Ralph knew that he wouldn't make it to that nice reed in time, so he just curled his tail round a closer reed, a weak, thin reed of kelp.

The huge wave came rushing past, pulling the weak kelp from its roots. Ralph shot across the water like an airplane, clinging hopelessly to his torn, ruined seaweed

What WAS happening! It wasn't good. He had been thrown right into a little, squishy rock pool. But the worst part about what had happened was that his family weren't there to comfort him!

Ralph decided to take his mind away from the terrible news. He thought that sleep would give him calmness. But just as he was about to dose off, he suddenly heard an unfamiliar voice.

"Can I help you?" it asked.

Ralph jumped in fright. The rock pool had just talked to him!

It asked again.

"Can I help you?"

So Ralph told the rock-pool about his problem. "So, I was um... guessing if you could maybe... um... whoosh me back... err... to sea?" He asked shyly.

"Ooh, I can't do that! But I'll do something else," replied the rock-pool. It made this strange noise.

\*

Meanwhile, I had gone to the beach with my family, and heard a weird sound. I mentioned it to my family, but as usual no-one actually listened to a word I had said. The sound was heard again. And again. I followed the sound. It led me right to a rock pool, and right to a little seahorse clinging to an un-useful little reed.

*'If that seahorse doesn't get back to its family... well... who knows what will happen?? So, maybe I could pick it up and carry it? No... it will die of no water. I've got a good idea! I can carry it in a bucket full of water!'*

I filled up our bucket with salt water, and carried it over to the rock pool. The seahorse was still there, near the surface of the water. I sat the bucket down and put Ralph in it.

I carried him to the sea. I then thought, *'His family won't be at the shore. I will take further into the sea.'*

\*

Soon enough, Ralph was reunited with his family.

# Smile

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By Lauren Peach, Age 10

If I could do something to change the world  
I'd do something really simple

I'd ask all the men, women, boys and girls  
To smile a huge smile.  
One that ends in a dimple.

A smile can be big  
A smile can be small  
The way you smile doesn't matter at all  
Your smile can be crooked, all wonky and wrong  
But a smile is always beautiful - it says, "Hey, we can get along!"

A real smile is something only humans can do  
It says to another, "I care about you!"

It says, "We can be friends, I'd like to help you today.  
I'd like to work together to make all the hatred go away."

This planet is big  
It's full of good people  
We believe different things  
Whether a mosque or a steeple

But the one thing we share  
Whether black, white or other  
Is the smile that says.  
"I care about you like you are my brother."

So my wish for the world  
Is to smile more each day

To care for each other  
No matter how we pray

To care for each other  
No matter what books  
No matter what temple  
Or the way our skin looks

If I could do something to change the world  
I'd do something really simple

I'd ask the world to smile at each other  
And to make that smile big - make it end with a dimple!